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SOME ACCOUNT
OF A VERY
SEDITIONOUS BOOK,
LATELY FOUND UPON
WIMBLEDON COMMON,

BY ONE OF
HIS MAJESTY'S SECRETARIES OF STATE,

WITH A
COMMENTARY, BY THE RIGHT HON. GENTLEMAN,
AND
NOTES BY THE EDITOR.

Nullum esse librum tam malum, quod non ab
aliquâ parte prodesset.

PLIN. *Lib. 3. Epist. 5.*

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SOME ACCOUNT
OF
A VERY SEDITIOUS BOOK,
&c. &c.

*Nullum esse librum tam malum quod non ab aliqua
parte prodesset.*

PLIN. Lib. 3. Epist. 5.

AS I was travelling a few days ago over Salisbury Plain, full of serious reflections upon the enormous trade and population of Old Sarum, and those decayed principles of our national representation, by which this flourishing town is allowed to send no more than two Representatives to Parliament, I was disturbed in my reverie by the stumbling of my horse, who had set his foot upon one of those seditious pamphlets with which our enemies of late have sowed the forests, wilds, and heaths of the kingdom. Having made my groom (for I am not an author) alight and deliver it to me, I was not a little delighted to see it was the identical treatise lately

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found

found by Mr. Dundas upon Wimbledon Common, enriched with annotations, in the handwriting of the Right Hon. Secretary himself. Though I guessed, from some hints relating to the voluntary subscription so strongly recommended by Ministers to the Governors of Counties, that this extraordinary Book had a second time mistaken or stopped short in its way, I thought I should defraud the Public of its just right, and do an irreparable injury to the amiable Commentator himself, were I from a mere scruple or conjecture to transmit his remarks to an individual, more especially as it did not seem improbable that he had adopted the method of publication, from the success which seems to have attended this invention of our mutinous reformers.

When I had read this performance with the attention I thought it deserved, the opinion of Pliny, with which I have taken the liberty to preface these pages, occurred to me; and the advantage to be derived from a perusal of the worst books struck my mind so forcibly, that I was tempted to lament the vigilance of that worthy and incorrupt Magistrate, Mr. Chief Justice Reeves, and the Association over which he presides with so much honour to himself, and utility to the country; and to repine at the complete success
their

their endeavours have been crowned with in suppressing it thro' all the towns and villages of the kingdom; so that none, I am informed by the Booksellers, are to be met with, but such as by a fortune like my own and the Secretary's, may be picked up by travellers upon the highways, or more probably upon the wilds and woolds of our most uncultivated counties.

The notes of the Right Hon. Writer contain the most complete antidote to the poison so cautiously circulated by the ingenuity of our enemies; and would, in my private opinion, make it perfectly safe and justifiable for me to republish the whole pamphlet, to the falshood and malevolence of which they offer so unanswerable an answer. But out of respect to the Crown and Anchor Society, and in obedience to the opinion of Mr. Reeves, and of the Commentator himself, who seems to think it safer to suppress it, I shall deny myself this satisfaction, and restrain myself to communicate to the Public only such passages, of those that could cause any discussion, as are most happily exposed and refuted by their illustrious Critic: I imagine, however, that I might be pardoned, if I ventured to extract a few of the most obnoxious and seditious paragraphs, if it was merely to justify the activity of the Association, and to account

for the peculiar notice they have been honoured with from the Secretary of State.

The very few notes or illustrations I may be tempted to add to those I have so much pleasure in presenting to the Public, I shall distinguish with the letter E, having no other title to merit or blame than that of an Editor. The remarks of Mr. Dundas will be subscribed Commentator, as often as they occur; and the notes will be printed with a different letter.

This extraordinary performance is entitled, “The Cries of the People;” a very *seditions* title-page, as it is well observed by the Commentator, who makes the following remark upon it :

Note.—Memorandum. To forward the construction of the barracks, raise more regiments, double the militia, &c. &c. Cries ? Who cries ?—*Comment.*

The Pamphlet opens with a very ingenious and learned disquisition upon “The embarrassments which it pretends the ancient governments must have experienced in acquiring the knowledge of the public opinion and sentiment upon national measures, considering their ignorance of the representative principle, and of printing. The modern governments, says the
Writer, /

Writer, have exhausted every art, and strained every nerve of power, sometimes to flifle, and sometimes to corrupt it.

“ At Athens, which I apprehend presents the most perfect model of a popular republic, the citizens were not privileged, but compelled to attend the public discussions, and such as were tardy in their attendance were stigmatized and fined. Previous to the holding of an assembly, the question to be debated was affixed for several days to the temples of the gods, and the statues of patriots. It was not permitted to be neutral and indifferent, the people were incited and provoked to examine the measures of government, and to express their satisfaction or their censure. The state asserted its right to become the depositary of private sentiment, and to profit by the judgment of individuals.

“ Where maxims so wise and so virtuous (continues this shallow Pamphleteer) were cherished and revered, it is no wonder that every art and every elegance, every science and every virtue, should flourish too, and that men should be reared whose acts astonish our little souls !”

Note—Shallow Pamphleteer !—*Comment.*

“The author then proceeds to enquire into the manner of taking the *ὕψισμα* or suffrages, the *πρόσγραμμα* or statement of the question, and the influence of the orators, whom he asserts to have been the most finished statesmen of those times, and the best acquainted with the affairs, interests and ambition of foreign states, accomplished Generals, and Ministers distinguished for their conduct in war, or their skill and success in negotiation.”

Note—Libel upon Pitt. What is Demosthenes's scheme to raise supplies, to the double policy of the subscriptions.—
Comment.

I profess I do not perceive the libellous matter complained of. The last *glorious* peace, and the last *successful* campaign, will convince posterity that Mr. Pitt is equally great in the conduct of a war or a negotiation.—*Editor.*

We are next carried to Rome, where “the method of collecting votes, we are told, was more aristocratical, from the inequality of numbers contained in the different tribes, and the inequality of property which determined the particular tribe of the citizen.” This is called very *seditiously*, “the first usurpation upon the people; but the principle of general enquiry, the publicity of discussion, and its liberty, with the judicial power in the last resort retained by them, left them out of danger, as yet, of seeing their
voice

voice neglected, or their opinion despised ; the root of every disorder, the fruitful source of every violent change and revolution.”

Note—Not if the troops are kept uncontaminated by mixing with the citizens.—*Comment*.

“ Amongst our German ancestors) we are told in that invaluable treatise upon their manners and institutions, which we must accept in extenuation of the wrongs they suffered from Rome), the freedom of debate was encouraged and provoked by wine: their candid intemperance promulged the secret of the soul ; it dissipated the fears of modesty, and disarmed intrigue and dissimulation ; it conquered the repugnance of timid merit, and nerved the ingenuous tongue against the hackneyed tyrants of debate. These assemblies were held solely for the purpose of enquiry and discussion ; no question was ever called for in those rude parliaments ; no numbers triumphed in the convivial senate of the inventors of liberty. They deliberate, says their historian when it is impossible to feign ; they decide, when they cannot mistake.

Note—Cato and I—*hæc in re scilicet unâ*—If drinking made these savages sincere, it was owing to their d——d sour ale. Pitt and I do as much public business at table as twenty of their barbarous Gemotes ; and we both agree, that wine has

no tendency whatever to unlock the privacy of the bosom ; yet we cannot tempt Lord Hawkbury to drink.—*Comment.*

The author next makes some slight mention of the “ *Diurna populi Romani*,” which he translates Journals, and maliciously insinuates, that “ he would rather see one of them, than all the profound and elegant speculations of Messrs. Rose and Burges. He even has the audacity to hint, that their joint productions would not suffer, if the fluent nonsense and grammatical fopperies of the Under-Secretary of State were not to set the vulgar sense of his illiterate colleague at defiance. *Gil Blas*, says he, you owe your life to the public, study your grammar.”

Note—There is an artful equivoque here, which Sir John Scott might inuendo into a libel. Poor *Gil Blas* ! his life ? meaning to write his Adventures, or to finish them ? to write or to be hanged ? Ridiculous—a Secretary of the Treasury be hanged—or write either. I think it is libellous.—*Comment.*

Gil Blas sold places for the first Minister ; so far I think the allusion libellous. It is well known Mr. Rose keeps them all himself. *Gil Blas*, too, turned out an honest fellow at last. I fear the resemblance is too trifling to support the inuendo.—*Editor.*

From these “ *Diurna*,” we are led to consider the great advantages the modern governments might have derived from an entire liberty of the press,

press, the abuse of which this shallow writer declares is always exactly equal to the previous restraints it has suffered. “ A newspaper, he next says, publicly patronized by the government of a country, whose business it is to defame whoever opposes, is the worst of all possible libels, and its authors the most base and cowardly of all calumniators.

“ By arts like these, says he, the public opinion is corrupted on the one hand, and by rigorous punishments it is overawed on the other ; the relation between the government and the people is destroyed, and they remain in profound ignorance of the views and wishes of each other. By stifling complaints, and by persecuting those who complain, murmurs are suppressed, but groans are increased and strengthened. None will petition who cannot threaten ; and men look not for redress, but revolutions.

“ Were there no force, no control over opinion, and were there, above all, no danger in displaying our political sentiments, we should never brood over our wrongs and miseries long enough to imagine extraordinary remedies, nor feel them so intensely as to have recourse to them ; our complaints would burst forth impatiently with every circumstance that gave rise to
 C them ;

them ; and it would be impossible for a government to be so ignorant of our discontents, or of the causes of them, as to expose itself to any violent shock, or the hazard of fundamental innovations. The moment any party is condemned to silence, in my opinion, it is condemned to rebellion ; it is forced to secret meetings and clandestine communications ; it is exposed to danger, which justifies all means ; and there are no steps between its ruin and the success of its object.

“ If it were possible to suppose an administration so corrupt and abandoned, so lost to every sentiment and feeling of humanity, and of its own peculiar duties, as to design and endeavour to nourish discontent and unhappiness, and drive a part of the people into despair and insurrection ; it would doubtless treat their complaints with insolence, and insult their calamities ; it would display the terrors of perverted laws in the selection of its victims, and the severity of their punishments ; it would chuse for the commencement and essay of its tyranny some distant and extreme corner of the kingdom, where the difference, and obscurity of the laws, and of the administration of justice, might diminish something of the horror which would be generally felt at sudden and portentous examples of cruelty, in
a nation

a nation naturally mild, merciful, and forgiving ; it would remove the spectacle farther off, till it could bring the precedent nearer home, and endeavour to familiarize us with the doctrine, before it set up the practice amongst us.

Note—There is some judgment in this hypothesis, I am convinced, that the present punishment of sedition by the laws of England is not severe enough to meet the exigency of the times, and that it will be shortly necessary to make them more so.—*Comment.*

The reader will observe, that the Right Hon. Commentator expressed himself precisely in the words he has here employed upon Mr. Adam's motion respecting the criminal judicature of Scotland, Tuesday, March 25.—*Editor.*

The author, pursuing the hypothesis which has extorted a species of approbation from the candour of the Secretary, proceeds in the following spirited manner :

“ Were there to exist a design so monstrous and so abominable, it could scarcely be carried on for any length of time, or be communicated to any great number of persons, without betraying itself by its own symbols, and by the vanity and insolence of the conspirators ; for there is this essential difference in plots which are contrived against governments, and those which are carried on by them ? that the first have occasion for

secrecy and silence, upon which their safety and success depend ; but the others are most effectually advanced by a gradual and artful discovery, by familiarizing the minds of men with their object, and diminishing by slow and imperceptible degrees their natural horror and repugnance.

The plots that are carried on by Governments against the people are of two kinds : they are either plots against liberty, or plots against peace ; either plots to engage them in unjust or unnecessary wars, or plots to disgust them with their ancient laws and institutions. But frequently these plots are made auxiliary, and subservient to each other ; so that it is no novel spectacle to those who have directed their attention and study to political affairs, to behold the same people, as they become exhausted and oppressed by the expence and calamities of war, growing, in an equal degree, indifferent or hostile to their own constitution. The justest war may be conducted with profusion and absurdity, and the most unjust one with œconomy and ability : whenever war is carried on against the foreign enemy, without any sinister view or object at home, it will be managed with vigour and frugality ; but as often as it is destined to be an engine of corruption, and is part of a ministerial

nisterial plot, then it will be marked with prodigality and negligence, and its disgraces and disappointments will be in proportion to the exertions of government, and the burthens of the people.

Note—When a people grows tired of its laws, they may surely be induced to change them without any conspiracy of Ministers? And the conduct of wars must evidently be exposed to more accidents and calamities, in proportion to the magnitude and extent of their objects: If we had not carried on hostilities in so many places, it is a clear inference that we could not have failed so often; but the insinuation that we have ever miscarried by design, is untrue and unfair.

—*Comment.*

This insinuation, I protest, would have escaped me, had I not received assistance from the perspicacity of Mr. Secretary. I should have considered the text as a mere abstract proposition, irrelative to any particular occurrence; especially since I became convinced of the successes of the last campaign, as I did very *punctually* upon the first day of the meeting of Parliament.—*Editor.*

The Pamphleteer then proceeds to attribute the errors and misfortunes of the present times to a *contempt for the people*, which he asserts was the special cause of the revolution in France, and must be that of other revolutions.

Note—Inuendo England.—*Comment.*

A contempt

“ A contempt, says he, for the people, and I speak not here of that callous indifference for their lot, of that obdurate mockery of their sufferings and their patience, which is the habit of Courts, and the nature of Ministers ; but a contempt of their understanding, a proud, unjust, and ignorant scorn for their opinion, a vulgar and fastidious prejudice against their discernment and the faculties of their mind, is among the first and prominent causes of their misery, their discontent and despair.

Note—If the misery, discontent, and despair of the people be admitted, with what consistency can we be blamed for the subscriptions, which will effectually point out to us all these wretches, who must be narrowly watched, or the continental war be condemned, which has provided for thirteen thousand of them at *Birmingham alone*, as I can prove to the satisfaction of Parliament, from the Justice’s books ? But our enemies do not care how inconsistent their arguments are, provided they can misrepresent what we do to relieve the public calamities.—*Comment*.

A strong argument that the manufacturers approve of the war, if thirteen thousand of them enlist in the service. A very loyal town Birmingham, very loyal mob, very loyal riots.—N. B. Sends no members to Parliament. *Quere*, If all the populous towns were disfranchised ? *ad res.*—*Comment*.

But previous to the proofs he brings in favour of an assertion, so admirably commented by

by the Right Hon. Minister, he enquires gravely who the people are? I shall select a few extracts from this animated part of the pamphlet, carefully suppressing all the libellous, seditious, and treasonable matter, excepting alone where the remarks of Mr. Dundas have afforded a complete antidote to them.

“ What are the people?—Of whom do they consist?—What part of the nation do they compose?—In France this question was agitated with skill, though not without violence; and a solution was given under the forms of truth, which was not only false but malicious. *Le Tiers Etat*, it was answered, *est la Nation, moins le Clergé, et la Noblesse*. The Abbé Syeyes, in his celebrated treatise, has pronounced this truth to be *geometrically demonstrated*, though he has ridiculed the flegm and coldness of the proposition. He well knew, however, the moral fraud of this geometrical verity, and that the people contains every order in the state, though the equivocal term of *Tiers Etat* suggested the facility of the imposition. When we are asked in England What are the people? shall we give an answer which would exclude the priests and the aristocracy? I think not; for though the terrors that have been lately instilled by the arts of Ministers into these orders, have distinguished

guished and insulated them somewhat more than was necessary, and more than was wise, from the great mass of the nation, yet their duties, their interests, and their inclinations are national, and they have been duped and frightened, rather than corrupted and debauched.—The people is the nation, then, not excepting the orders of the state, and the distinctions of the constitution, in the distribution it has ordained of powers and duties, but *those alone who have separated themselves from the people*, to adopt other interests, and follow fortunes different or hostile to theirs. The people is the nation, excepting THE COURT; and when I speak of the *Court*, I include the Ministers that are corrupted and enslaved by it; I include the mercenary Representative, the perjured Voter, the purchased Peer, the holder of unknown and unknowable sinecures, the pluralist of office, the sycophant who is pensioned, and him who only is promised; I include the Tide-waiter of the Custom-house, the army of Excisemen, and the whole length of tail that streams behind that disastrous comet, which ravishes the spheres of government, and will crush the system of the constitution.

Note—If the people are the whole nation, excepting the Court, can any person possessed of common sense and candour accuse or blame the Court for bringing over as many of the people as it can to its side; which, considering the difference

ference of their interests, it is impossible to do, without bribing and corrupting the people. This is one of the beneficent uses of the wealth of the Civil List, which, as Lord Hawkebury says, is only too small for the exigency.—Memorandum. To shew him this passage and the following, he and his son have much too great a share ; for I myself, who do not pretend to understand these matters half so well as he, could corrupt fifty with half of his emoluments, and he do all our jobs just as well for the other.—Good,—only for the precedent.—Mem. To throw no stones.—*Comment.*

The people, therefore, is the uncorrupt and virtuous part of the nation ; and it is lamentable to consider how great a portion has been subtracted from their number, by the treacherous extension of the wealth and influence of the Crown, and the unjust and perfidious prodigality of their own representatives, as well in later as in more ancient times : and how many have been misled and frightened from the midst of them, by the peculiar anxiety and artificial terrors of the present

Note—Terror just as good and cheaper than bribery.—
Comment.

The terrors of the present conjuncture, artfully created and propagated by Ministers, have made many of us blind to the dangers that threaten our domestic liberty and constitution. Some, whom Ministers could not corrupt,

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have

have been frightened into trusting them, by an artifice hitherto better known in our nurseries than in the schools of statesmen. What, not trust the King's servants? *The Jacobins shall take you*—Not believe in the plots and invasions? *The Jacobins shall take you*—Not subscribe to the benevolence? *The Jacobins shall take you*.—Others that were not so easily imposed upon, were at last intimidated in their turn. What, dispute the King's prerogative! to land foreign troops? You are a Jacobin! apprehend from the barracks?—Republican! Refuse ye subscription?—Regicide.

Opinion, says Sophocles, is more powerful than truth*, and it is a proof that he was a statesman as well as a poet. No man is afraid of being thought to disbelieve that which he knows to be true; but his eagerness to declare his belief in any particular matter is proportioned to the doubts he entertains of it, and to the danger of being thought to entertain doubts.

The King's Ministers, who have uniformly thought too meanly of the common sense of the people, contented themselves with the appearances they extorted of our belief; which they

* το γὰρ Νόμισμα τῆς ἀληθείας κρείσσον.

knew would be more noisy and ostentatious than the simple and silent acquiescence of real conviction. And as our expressions were loud and clamorous, they think to hold us still by the shame of confessing we were so grossly deceived. But had they consulted instead of perverting our opinion, and instead of surprising our passions, appealed to our reason, not only would they have learned what we really thought and desired, but they would have been certain of every support from us, and independent of the dormant prerogative of demanding benevolences, and of the forced, I mean voluntary, subscriptions of the counties. But their contempt for us has led them into a system so fatal to liberty, and so dangerous to their own lives and fortunes, that as they have long trembled from our despair, so we have every thing to apprehend from *theirs* ; for if ever our constitution should be restored to us, and the right of Parliament be re-established, of exclusively granting supplies to the Crown, their situation will be desperate indeed, and their punishment too certain and too severe, for them not to tempt and trust every fortune, rather than to suffer *such a revolution*.

As soon as ever a Minister has violated the laws of his country, he must unavoidably be-

come the enemy of its constitution, from the dictates of self-preservation. His first crimes may be those of ambition, avarice, or despotism, but the last are of necessity itself.

Note—I call Heaven to witness, I advised to accept of the Indemnity Bill.—*Comment.*

But his attack upon it would not be violent and sudden, nor his hostility undisguised and declared, unless he either despised the understanding of the people, or were enabled to brave its resentments

Note—As the Right Hon. Commentator has not thought it worth his while to confute these hypotheses, I do not think it prudent to pursue the reasoning of the writer any farther in this place, nor to reprint the whole of what he has said respecting what he calls the *Nepotism of the Minister*. By this expression he appears desirous to insinuate, that too great a share of the power and emoluments of the government are engrossed by his family ; which he accuses of a persecuting and exclusive spirit ; and taxes with avarice, ambition, and arrogance, with so little management of terms, and colouring of justice, that we imagine Mr. Dundas thought it unnecessary to refute him. We shall not, however, expose the public to the danger of being misled and deluded by the unfounded assertions of this writer of pamphlets, for want of a fair statement of the case from ourselves.

The pension of four thousand pounds paid annually by the public, is divided among the whole family, which were in great want of it ; for the late excellent and pure Lord Chat-
ham

ham derived no other emoluments from his public services, excepting the estate of a private family (out of which, it is said, a small annuity is given to the children), and ten thousand pounds, paid him by Sarah Duchess of Marlborough, for his opposition to the government. See the *Case of Sir William Pynsent*, and the *Letters of the Duchess of Marlborough*.

The two brothers have nothing besides between them but the Treasury, the Exchequer, and the Admiralty, if I except the Cinque-Ports, which are vainly supposed to be a sinecure of five thousand pounds a year, since a very troublesome and ungrateful service is attached to it, that of returning Members for the most corrupt and odious boroughs in the whole kingdom. My Lord Grenville is very modestly contented with the seals of the Foreign Department and the Auditorship of the Exchequer, which he generously prefers to the Rangership of the two Parks. His elder brother, newly converted to the family interest, can scarce yet be said to have got into the national saddle, not having more than two thousand pounds a year sinecure ; and the Marquis of Buckingham has nothing but a Tellership of the Exchequer, which is so far from a sinecure, that his Lordship is well known to be his own first Clerk. His enemies have taken occasion, from this very circumstance, to accuse him of a little vice, called by the French *mesquinerie*, and by the English dirtiness. There is an evident artifice in considering Mr. Dundas as one of this family, because, as he is not a relation, it insinuates he is a dependant ; and the malevolence of the author, or his partiality, is grossly displayed in the enumeration he carefully makes of this Gentleman's offices, which do not exceed five : because he says not one word of all those occupied by Lord Hawkebury, for whom he shews, upon more occasions than this, the most marked favour : constantly preferring him to the Pitts, whom he affects to consider as galled and kided by the great power and authority of that Lord.

Upon

Upon this occasion, the able Critic of his shallow performance makes the following remark, in the French language, which appears to be extracted from some author, to whom I lament my ignorance in not being able to refer the reader.

Note—A-t-on remarqué que dès que le gouvernement devient le patrimoine d'une classe particulière, il s'enfle bientôt hors de toute mesure? les places s'y créent non pour le besoin des gouvernés, mais pour celui des gouvernans.—*Comment.*

Nothing in the world can be a stronger proof of the open and ingenuous mind of the Secretary, and the contempt he entertains for the pamphleteer, than his citation of this passage, by which he gives him to understand, that his laborious nothings are not new to his mind, and that he has always known and despised every consideration of the same nature with those which employ him. *It is the natural effect*, says he, with his usual sincerity, *that when the government becomes the patrimony of a particular class, it should be swollen beyond all measure; and that places should be created, not according to the necessity of those who are governed, but of those who govern.* What a contrast does the candour of the Commentator present to, the obscure and tortuous insinuations of his author! —*Editor.*

Our miserable scribbler next proceeds to give instances, as he calls them, of the contempt entertained by the King's servants for the people. "If they had not despised their understanding, as well as their sufferings; if they were not resolute

folute to insult, as well as to ruin, and to ruin by means of insulting us, would they have dared to declare, in the King's Manifesto, that the great majority of the French nation were averse to the Republic, and desirous of the restoration of Louis the Seventeenth? Would they have asserted in the Speech the successes of an inglorious campaign, in which the cockboats of the enemy insulted the coasts of England; in which her commerce was suspended and injured by the delay or denial of convoys, and her West-India fleet entered the Channel under the protection of an *eight-and-twenty gun frigate*? Of a campaign, in which our attempts upon the French West-India Islands were defeated for the want of those very troops who were defeated before Dunkirk; I will not say by the treachery of Administration, or of the Boards of Administration, but by their indolence, their imbecillity, their extreme ignorance and unfitness for the business of their several departments: of a campaign, which concluded with our precipitate and dishonourable expulsion from Toulon, and the abandonment of three-fourths of that invaluable prize, which the crimes and misfortunes of our enemy had thrown into our lap?

Whatever were our fortunes at the beginning of the war, which, since the retreat of Dumourier

rier from Holland, has changed its nature, its object, and its principle, they are certainly infinitely more lowering and more unhappy at the conclusion of this *successful* campaign, than before we had made any experiment of the abilities of our Ministers, the vigilance of our fleets, and the conduct of our commanders. We may remember the celebrated argument of Demosthenes, and apply it to our own circumstances and feelings : *Have we done well ; and has it succeeded no better with us ? then indeed our situation is desperate. But if faults have been committed, and our affairs have been ill-administered, then we have found out the cause of our condition, and have a right to hope, the moment we have taken care to remove it.* Will Ministers consent to the application of this rule, and acknowledge their own errors and imbecillity, that they may keep alive any *hope* in the country ; or will they insult its common sense by persevering in the same errors, and declaring again that our losses are victories, and our defeats and disappointments success ? Let them chuse :—*If they have done the best, we must despair ; if they have not, let them yield to those who are more capable.* But let them cease, at any rate, to despise and deride our understanding, which is never safe, and never wise nor honest ; but is dangerous, and absurd and criminal

minal, in those especially who have no title to any superiority over us in that respect, and enjoy, at least, no privilege or prerogative above us in the provinces of reason, and the departments of the mind.

“ This *successful* campaign has concluded, amongst other *prosperous* events, with the defeat of our *allies* upon the Rhine, and of those who *ought to have been our allies* in Brittany and Poitou. The federalist and the royal factions are no more, and the authority of the Committee of Safety is acknowledged from the Pyrennees to the Channel, and from Strasburg to the Mediterranean. The defection of the King of Prussia is public and declared ; and if his troops are retained by the prodigality of England, he is no longer a principal, no, nor an ally in the cause? but precisely like the Prince of Hesse and the *Elector of Hanover*, who take the *price of blood*, and lend us their subjects at so much by the head.

“ This *successful* campaign has concluded with the menaces of Sweden and Denmark, to whom we impudently dictated a new code of the laws nations, and with dreadful indications of activity in the Court of St. Petersburg. The Empress of Russia, who derides every quality of

Mr. Pitt both as a man and a Minister, and who has never submitted to these metaphysical distinctions, nor separated the terms in her ideas, looks down upon the only power in Europe which could have planted a barrier to her enterprizes, with the coldness of contempt, and the exultation of victory. The negotiations of Jussuf Effendi are no cause of care or solicitude to her; her march lies wide and open to Constantinople from the possession of Ockzakow, and her fleets apprehend no enemy in the Mediterranean. England exhausted of her blood by her impolitic wars upon the Continent, and of her treasure by the prodigal subsidies she pays to *foreigners*, as well as *at home*, to those who are the *worst of foreigners*, who have *interests foreign* to those of the *people*, who have *ambition hostile to the freedom of their country*.—England can give her now no pause, no obstacle, no opposition. Her losses consigned to no register, no archive, no gazette, are detailed in the feebleness of her efforts. It is at *Corfica* that the slaughter of Toulon is legible and counted. The besiegers of Bastia are the relics of that noble army, and their numbers amount only to *twelve hundred men*. Our misfortunes at Dunkirk are still involved in a political mist; but there is a *bill for value received from Hanover*,
that

that may throw some light upon a part of them."

After pursuing this strain of reasoning, mixed with a considerable degree of irony and invective through many pages, the writer adverts to the impunity of the Ministers, and the abject terrors of the nation to which he attributes it; and insists, in energetic terms, " that the King's Servants could not have acted in such a manner, unless they despised the understanding, and were determined to humble the spirit of the people."

Note—When it was debated amongst us, whether, in the Speech, the campaign should be treated as fortunate or unfortunate, there was naturally so much recrimination, that the good of the country, which is always with us the *suprema lex*, required a common forgiveness and reconciliation; all the untoward circumstances were accordingly forgotten by authority: besides, we had the Prince of Saxe-Cobourg's victories to boast of, and other events during the former session of Parliament.—*Comment.*

Could the landing of foreign troops have been asserted to be the King's prerogative, if the people had not been so often insulted, and their opinion set at defiance, that it was apparently become safe to rattle their chains in their ears, and overawe their resentment?

Could every town in the kingdom be bridled with barracks, if the nation were not supposed to be already frightened out of its senses, and prepared to part tamely with its constitution ?

And could a nation be so frightened, or so depraved, unless by the repetition and impunity of insults, as well as wrongs, and by such a prerogative, and barracks ?

When the Bill of Indemnity was agitated in the House of Commons, and the prerogative arrogantly asserted by the King's Servants, I confess it was not without a malevolent, but involuntary, sentiment of pleasure that I heard them reject it. The decision seemed to me almost indifferent at this time, for they were become criminal by the very pretension itself ; and if, on the one hand, the power of the Crown has obtained a momentary triumph, the crime of the Ministers remains open to punishment on the other. We are not precluded, upon any fortunate emancipation, from our present torpor and infatuation, from calling them to account ? no Indemnity Bill *stands in our way*, the only pardon they could plead to our impeachment.

When I said that the decision upon this debate was almost immaterial, it was not because their impunity seemed a matter of indifference, but

but because the crime had already been committed in the treachery with which they were desirous at once to lay open every fence and barrier of the constitution to the irresistible invasion of the prerogative.

In ipsâ dubitatione et deliberatione scelus est etiam si ad scelus non pervenerit.

To doubt and deliberate upon the liberties of the country was a crime, though they had not been guilty of the crime of betraying them.

Note—Prosperum et felix scelus.

Virtus vocatur.——Comment.

If there did not exist a design to insult, as well as to intimidate, could the arbitrary sentences of the Justiciary Courts of Scotland have been pushed to punish the crime of opinion with transportation? Could our own tribunals have raged with so much fury against the booksellers and printers, till at last they have been checked by the good sense and spirit of our juries? Could an unfortunate Englishman, at the end of the eighteenth century, have been condemned and imprisoned for publishing the opinions of the King's first Minister, and another member of his cabinet? and the nation pre-
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sent to the scorn and pity of Europe, and its own eternal infamy and dishonour, the spectacle of one man groaning in a dungeon, another wallowing in luxury, and robed with power, both guilty of the self-same act ? *Is this equality before the law ? Is this liberty ? Is this the constitution ?* Is it not enough that in Scotland the punishment of thinking should be left to the *politics* of the Judge, that the sentence of the law should depend upon the newspaper printed by the Secretaries of the Treasury, or the pamphlet circulated by the Minister ? That the wisdom of a *Scotch Burgomaster* should sum up the secrets of cabinets, and calculate the fates of Europe, in order to ascertain the penalty to be inflicted upon such as drink thicker coffee, and read any other Machiavel than the luminous Mr. Bowles ? Is not this enough ? But must we, in our own walls, in London itself, the metropolis of science, and *once* of liberty, must we behold our citizens led to prison, because the politics of the Minister have changed, and he has kicked down the ladder by which he mounted into power ? Can they think men will submit any longer than necessity compels them, or prudence dictates, to examples like these, and that the nation will fail to vindicate its constitution, by the impeachment of Judges and of Ministers like these, as soon as it recovers from
its

its ague fit, and shakes no longer with the remedy, as well as the disease ?

Ne credideris ullum populum, aut hominem denique in eâ conditione cuius eum pæniteat diutius quam necesse sit mansurum. This, we are told by Livy, was the opinion of the *better part* of the Senate of Rome, when it was agitated to punish a rebellious town, which it finally determined to make free, as the only means of securing its fidelity. *Eo loco ubi servitutem esse velis fidem desperes*, said the same illustrious majority to an arrogant senator who demanded the punishment, and hated the courage and dignity of citizens who asserted their right to be free. The passage is in the *Eighth Book, cap. 21.* and is worthy the perusal of the whole *ministerial league*. They will learn there the sentiments of a brave and generous people, and the maxims of a wise and virtuous government.

Note—Memorandum. To consult this passage, and engage Mr. Wyndham to refute it.—*Comment.*

Note—Whether or not there be libel here upon the Lords of Session and the English Crown Lawyers, I know not ; nor whether we can transport a man for threatening to impeach us : but this I know, that when I was Lord Advocate, I could have got all this done in Scotland, and that it ought to be so here. For though I have uniformly opposed the communication of English liberty to my own country, yet

I have

I have no objection to the introduction of a little Scotch *discretion* into England. Several people complain of the severity of the punishments—true ! but if these reformers had been left to run about, they might have complained themselves, you know, my good Lord !—*Comment.*

It is from the conclusion of this passage that I suspected the pamphlet, with its commentary, had missed its road.—*Editor.*

I am obliged to curtail the author considerably in this place, because though I find a whole Chapter dedicated to expose what he calls the fordidness, avarice, and corruption of the *Court* ; and to prove that the enormous extent of the *Civil List* is absolutely incompatible with any liberty or virtue whatsoever ; that it both corrupts our representatives, and enables them to corrupt our electors ; that it is absolutely unnecessary for *any purpose* of government, and prejudicial to *good government* ; that it maintains and augments a contemptible and indolent class of men ; that it overpowers and extinguishes all sense of personal honour and distinction, confounding the orders of the state in a base squabble and contention for favour and emolument ; that it withdraws the gentlemen of England from their houses and estates to their own ruin, the neglect of agriculture, improvement, and hospitality, to the preposterous aggrandizement and correspondent depravation of the capital, and the im-

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poverty of the country ; that it sets a detestable example of vice and shamelessness, ambitiously followed by other classes who propagate it in their turn; and that it is the fountain-cause of irreligion, as well as of vice, idleness, and immorality in the people. He compares the Civil List, and other emoluments of the Crown, with that of America, and asserts, that the dignity of General Washington's government is greater and more lustrous than our own, and that no Sovereign in Europe is half so honoured or so secure as the President of the United States. He glances at the wealth accumulated in the name of the Regency of Hanover, which, without the least foundation of probability, he connects with the enormity of the Civil List I say, I am obliged to curtail him here, because the Right Hon. Secretary has not thought it necessary to expose or refute him, though he unequivocally asserts, that of twelve hundred thousand pounds per annum, which is the private revenue of the Crown, nine hundred thousand are not only useless, but pernicious, and are expended to bribe and seduce the nation ; which thus pays its worst enemies with the produce of its sweat and labour, and is oppressed first with taxes, and corrupted by them afterwards. He asserts, that besides these nine hundred thousand pounds a year, the offices and sinecures in the gift of the Crown,

the administration of the revenue and its collection, its influence in the dependencies of the empire, the control of India, and the patronage of the church, law, army, and navy, give it such an authority and influence, that the Minister, or the Parliament, who do not diminish them more than one half, are almost as fatal to the constitution as those who construct barracks, levy benevolences, and maintain the King's prerogative to land foreign troops in the kingdom. "Whether they take our liberties by sap or by storm, says he, it is of no consequence to us ; and the only difference consists not in the crime they commit, but the insult with which they accompany it, and the danger which may reverberate to themselves."

I own, I cannot but wonder at the silence of the Right Hon. Commentator during all these grave and important accusations ; for at the end of them all, the only remark I meet with is the following :

Note—Corruption, the province of Lord Hawkebury.—
Comment.

which, whether it be a memorandum to refer the text to him for a defence, similar to what we have seen in a former instance relative to Mr. Windham, or a mere phlegmatic remark, occasioned by the evident partiality of the writer for that noble Lord, I am not able to determine.

determine. But I very soon find a passage, in which his Lordship is defended against a late writer, who is thought to have favoured the public with a very exact likeness of him; and I confess, I think with the Right Hon. Secretary, that considering the asperity with which himself and his friends are frequently handled in this seditious treatise, it looks as if the writer had a sinister intention of elevating his favourite upon their ruin, doing the little that is in his power to accustom the public to think favourably of his Lordship, and to regard his rivals with suspicion and resentment.

“ No man, says he, has rendered more services to the state than Lord Hawksbury, for he has rendered services of every order, degree, and description : he has served every administration, and in every capacity : he has served, by turns, the ambition of every Minister, and of every party, without being a friend or a partizan of any : and does he not now serve to thwart, and check, and bridle the enormous authority of the Pitts, to defend the Throne, and preponderate against them in the Cabinet ? Believe, me, says he, it is unjust to exaggerate or detail his frailties, and to give him no credit, on the other hand, for his utility or his merit. Avarice is far from the worst vice a Minister may possess ; and meanness is surely not to be taken for a crime in a Court. If he is cold and callous,

it is owing to that enviable quality that he preserves his situation ; and retains the power of obliging his ungrateful country, which has ever paid his services with contempt, and held his character and person in abhorrence. One entire cabinet of George the Second refused to serve with Lord Granville. Lord Chatham threw up when his advice was overruled. The Duke of Leeds resigned, when his colleagues abandoned the interests of their country, and retracted the counsels they had given to their Sovereign. But all these are instances of personal pride, honour, or sentiment, to which Lord Hawksbury has ever gloriously preferred the solid satisfaction of *serving* his country. And to say he has not served it disinterestedly, because he and his son divide about twelve thousand pounds a year between them, is at least as much a satire upon the Government as his Lordship, and, believe me, a greater satire upon the Parliament and the people than upon either. Neither is it fair or honest to represent this Nobleman (I confess I know not whether he is a Minister or not, and I do not perceive that it signifies much to the nation, which is always sure to profit by his advice, whether he is a Minister or not) ; I say, it is not fair to represent him, as some writers in the pay, no doubt, of our disinterested Administration seem obstinate to do, as perpetually employed in base and dirty offices
repugnant

repugnant to his nature, and painful to his feelings : certainly They are neither consistent with themselves, nor conversant with the noble person who bring this charge against him, any more than They who are perpetually taxing him with falshood and insincerity. His Lordship has enemies of a more generous nature, who allow, that these employments are grateful to his mind, and that if they are imposed upon him, it is neither by meanness nor servility, but by instinct and irresistible inclination. Treachery, say they, is his mistress ; it is the choice or necessity of his soul ; it is his passion, his habit, his enjoyment ; and corruption is his health, his diet, and his exercise : there is no baseness, and scarce an interest here : he works *cor amore*, as the Italians call it, rather than for the profits which incidentally await the curious felicity, the *chef-d'œuvres* of his art. And, as Seneca has said, that the extremes of guilt are occupied by virtue*, they do not scruple to assert, that in spite of the habitual fraud and falshood of his character, he is earnest and sincere in his contempt of Virtue, and his hatred of Freedom."

The Right Hon. Secretary has not favoured us with any note upon this passage, which is the more to be regretted, as we might perhaps have been satisfied upon this doubt, which has not been started for the first time in this place,

* *Extrema sceleris virtus occupat.*

Whether the noble person is a Minister or not ? And we should probably have found an easy clue to the cause and motive of this elaborate defence of his Lordship's character, which, though under the mask of candour, it affects to admit a few of his acknowledged failings, is artfully, but evidently intended to endear him to the public by the comparison it will not fail to make (and which cannot but turn out to his advantage) with some others of his Majesty's Ministers.

Having now arrived at the conclusion of the *First Part* of this extraordinary performance, I shall suspend my labours, rather than delay any longer the gratification of the public curiosity. My agreeable task will be resumed, from time to time, as I find leisure from graver occupations.

EDITOR.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE EDITOR requests the favour of any Gentlemen who may be fortunate enough to find any Political Treatises, in their hunting or shooting parties, and of any Traveller, who may meet with them upon any highway or common, to transmit them to him, viâ Mr. OWEN, for castration, translation, and publication.

